

"Technical" in the production of Hollywood's elaborate new musical, "Maytime"—a lifetime of romance told in music and lyrics, with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy—



## "MAYTIME"

*A first in film history, original opera written for a picture! "Czaritza" fills one entire reel of "Maytime", with a full operatic company supporting Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy*

"A LITTLE MORE SMOKE, please," shouts a man on a motion picture set, and in walk three men carrying small cans looking much like those containers from which service men pour oil into automobiles. However, these metal containers have tiny bellows at the top and a little pressure on the latter sends clouds of smoke out into the motion picture set.

The set represents a cellar cafe in the Latin Quarters of Paris in the year 1865. At a table sit a blonde actor and an actress with golden-red hair. Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald, one can tell at a glance.

The man is Director Robert Z. Leonard, directing the stars in their current co-starring Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, "Maytime".

Smoke is necessary for atmosphere and so the three men pump their bellows. They are ably assisted by more than fifty singers, all puffing on cigars.

"Ah," the visitor to the set remarks, "since there are no cigarets in the scene, that must be to avoid anachronism."

"No," replies Director Leonard, as he waits for the stars to touch up their make-up, "those cigars are for character."

Cigarets, he explains, were smoked in 1865. In fact, they were in vogue as early as 1842. But this scene is supposed to be a cafe frequented by poor students and artists and just as poor has-beens.

"Cigarets were far more expensive in those days than

cigars," says Leonard. "Therefore, to show that these people are poor, we have them smoking cigars—the men, that is."

One anachronism, however, is being avoided, Leonard points out. None of the girls in the scene, including Miss MacDonald, have painted fingernails. A few who arrived on the set with red nails had to have the polish removed. Tinted nails in 1865 would be wrong.

The cameras are ready and Eddy takes his place outside of the camera range and Miss MacDonald comes sweeping back from her make-up table. "Sweeping" is the correct word, for her gown is voluminous. So much so, in fact, that two wardrobe girls help her keep the dress and skirts from dragging the floor. The latter is strewn with straw and bits of debris for effect and the star's gown must be kept as clean as possible.

Now the camera, lights, stars and all concerned are ready.

"Quiet," shouts the assistant director. "Turn 'em over."

A buzz sounds in the camera. The recording machine is turning at top speed and Leonard orders, "Camera!"

Eddy plops into a chair at Miss MacDonald's table, panting, for he has just completed a song in the action of the story:

"How was that, ma belle amie?" he asks of this girl whom, according to the story, he has never met.

"Magnificent. Do it again," Jeanette replies.

"Jumping swordfish," cried Eddy, "you're American. Hot dog!"

"Cut," says Leonard and the scene ends with a huge laugh.

"Ah," whispers the visitor to Leonard, "that WAS an anachronism. They didn't say 'hot dog' in 1865."

Leonard smiles. "Right you are," he says. "But this shot ends after the line 'you're American'. That 'hot dog' was just a bit of Eddy's clowning. The cutter will trim it off."

FORTY COLORFUL GOWNS were created for Jeanette MacDonald, ranging in period from 1865 in Paris to 1905 in a small upstate town in New York. Nelson Eddy wears more than twenty-five changes, all of the earlier periods. In addition to their street clothes and evening wear of these periods, they also appear in elaborate operatic costumes.

One of Miss MacDonald's scenes is the staging of an act of "Les Huguenots" with a huge male chorus. This takes place in 1865 in the Opera Comique in Paris. In addition, Miss MacDonald works in scenes at the court of Louis

Napoleon. During these scenes, a reception background, the star sings two operatic arias.

The opera is the work of Herbert Stothart, composer and conductor, who has based his opus on Tschaiikowsky music and had lyrics written and translated into French. They are calling this opera, "Czaritza", and the music had to be done for "Maytime" because it is supposed to be an opera written by a fictitious composer for the prima donna. No known opera could therefore be used.

EIGHTY SETS WERE constructed for "Maytime". Most elaborate is the court of Louis Napoleon in 1865. There are opera houses, great parks, forests, streets of Paris, lavish hotel suites, an entire section of the Latin quarter of Paris and an apple orchard in full bloom.

## YOUR HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

DAVID  
KEENE

NEXT TIME YOU HEAR someone spouting about new stars being made overnight, tell 'em it ain't so and tell 'em I said so. Look around in nearly any direction at stars that were supposed to have enjoyed instant fame. Then look a little further into their backgrounds and you'll find stories of hard work and constant struggle.

For instance there's Bob Burns, thought by many to have been catapulted, full-blown, into stardom. The truth

about Bob reveals that for more than 30 years of tramping he made barely enough to keep body and soul together. But right now he's said to be making in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars a day. But don't forget he was a long time getting there.

Then there's Martha Raye, who was literally born in a trunk and was on the stage with her parents before she was three. It took exactly 18 years of almost hopeless tramping to

get Martha into the heavy dough.

There's a story making its rounds about Hollywood way about one George Davis who was called upon to wear a very smelly leather coat on location with Claudette Colbert for "I Met Him In Paris." Davis had the coat cleaned, but in so doing, destroyed what Director Wesley Ruggles called its character. This called for another smelly coat and more suffering on the part of Davis and

Claudette. Suddenly Davis got the bright idea of having Claudette spray it with some of her extra special perfume. What should have been a brilliant move on his part, turned out to be a palooka. The coat, with perfume, turned out to be far worse than the coat with only its natural odor. Claudette and Davis just couldn't take it. So Ruggles relented, had the coat cleaned, then had it "aged" and everyone was happy again, at least for awhile.